

CLAIMS

1. A sanitary napkin for placement in a crotch portion of an undergarment of a wearer, comprising:

- 5 a) a liquid-absorbing section for absorbing bodily exudate, said liquid-absorbing section including a longitudinal axis, a front portion and a rear portion, said liquid-absorbing section including:
- (i) a fluid-permeable cover layer;
- (ii) an absorbing system underneath said fluid-permeable cover layer;
- (iii) a liquid-impervious barrier layer underneath said absorbing system
- 10 b) a breathable extension component projecting from said liquid-absorbing section, said breathable extension component including a proximal edge and a distal edge spaced from said proximal edge by a distance of at least about 2.5 cm, said proximal edge being united to said liquid-absorbing section;
- 15 c) said breathable extension component being adjacent the rear portion of said liquid-absorbing section;
- 20 d) said breathable extension component having at least a portion of its extent that manifests a moisture vapor transmission rate of at least about 3000 g/m²/day;
- e) said breathable extension component having an average absorption capacity that is substantially less than an average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section.

25 2. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component has a moisture vapor transmission rate of at least about 4000 g/m²/day.

3. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component has a moisture vapor transmission rate of at least about 5000 g/m²/day.

5 4. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component has a longitudinally extending preferential bending zone, such that when the article is in use by the wearer at least a portion of said breathable extension component is capable of bending at said preferential bending zone so as to enter the wearer's gluteal groove.

10 5. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component each have an average absorption capacity, the average absorption capacity of said breathable extension component being less than the average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section.

15 6. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 5, wherein the average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio of about 20:1.

20 7. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 5, wherein the average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio ranging from about 20:1 to about 26:1.

25 8. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 5, wherein the average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio ranging from about 26:1 to about 29:1.

9. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein the liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component each have a thickness, the thickness of said

breathable extension component being less than the thickness of said liquid-absorbing section.

10. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 9, wherein the thickness of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio of about 5:1.

11. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 9, wherein the thickness of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio ranging from about 5:1 to about 8:1.

12. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 9, wherein the thickness of said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component have a ratio ranging from about 8:1 to about 11:1.

13. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said liquid-absorbing section and said breathable extension component each have a lateral flexibility, the lateral flexibility of said breathable extension component being greater than the lateral flexibility of said liquid-absorbing section.

14. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 13, wherein the ratio of the lateral flexibility of said liquid-absorbing section versus the lateral flexibility of said breathable extension component is of about 1:26.

15. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 13, wherein the ratio of the lateral flexibility of said liquid-absorbing section versus the lateral flexibility of said breathable extension component ranges from about 1:26 to about 1:38.

16. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 13, wherein the ratio of the lateral flexibility of said liquid-absorbing section versus the lateral flexibility of said breathable extension component ranges from about 1:38 to about 1:43.

5 17. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component is substantially impervious to liquid.

10 18. A sanitary absorbent article as recited in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component includes a layer continuous with a barrier layer of said liquid-absorbing section.

15 19. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 18, wherein said breathable extension component includes a liquid-permeable layer continuous with a cover layer of said liquid-absorbing section.

20 20. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 19, wherein said breathable extension component is substantially free of absorbent material between the liquid-permeable layer and the layer continuous with the barrier layer.

25 21. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 1, further comprising: a pair of flaps, each flap projecting laterally from a longitudinal side of said liquid-absorbent section, the flaps being capable of being folded over an edge of a crotch portion of an undergarment of the wearer, when the napkin is in use by the wearer.

22. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component projects rearwardly from said liquid-absorbing section.

23. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said breathable extension component includes a segment that projects laterally from said liquid-absorbing section.

5 24. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said sanitary napkin comprises a pair of flaps, each flap projecting laterally from a longitudinal side of said liquid-absorbing section, the flaps being capable of being folded over an edge of a crotch portion of an undergarment of the wearer, when the napkin is in use by the wearer, said breathable extension component including a section located between a flap and a rear extremity of said liquid-absorbing section.

10 25. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 24, wherein said breathable extension component includes two opposite sections projecting laterally from respective longitudinal sides of said liquid-absorbing section, each said section being located between a flap and the rear extremity of said liquid-absorbing section.

15 26. A sanitary napkin for placement in a crotch portion of an undergarment of a wearer, comprising:

20 a) a liquid-absorbing section for absorbing bodily exudate, said liquid-absorbing section including a longitudinal axis, a front portion and a rear portion, two longitudinal sides opposed to one another and extending between said front portion and said rear portion, said liquid-absorbing section including:

(i) a fluid-permeable cover layer;

(ii) an absorbing system underneath said fluid-permeable cover layer;

25 (iii) a liquid-impervious barrier layer underneath said absorbing system

- b) a breathable extension component projecting from said liquid-absorbing section, said breathable extension component including a proximal edge and a distal edge spaced from said proximal edge by a distance of at least about 2.5 cm, said proximal edge being united to said liquid absorbing section;
- c) said breathable extension component including a segment projecting from a longitudinal side of said liquid-absorbing section, said segment being adjacent the rear portion of said liquid-absorbing section;
- d) said segment manifesting a moisture vapor transmission rate of least about 3000 g/m²/day;
- e) said breathable extension component having an average absorption capacity that is substantially less than an average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section.

27. A sanitary napkin for placement in a crotch portion of an undergarment of a wearer, comprising:

- a) a liquid-absorbing section for absorbing bodily exudate, said liquid-absorbing section including:
 - (i) a longitudinal axis;
 - (ii) a front portion and a rear portion;
 - (iii) two longitudinal sides opposed to one another and extending between said front portion and said rear portion;
 - (iv) a pair of flaps projecting from said liquid-absorbing section along generally opposite directions, each flap being adjacent to a respective longitudinal side and being capable of being folded about the crotch portion of the undergarment of the wearer when the sanitary napkin is placed in the crotch portion of the undergarment of the wearer;
 - (v) a fluid-permeable cover layer;

(vi) an absorbing system underneath said fluid-permeable cover layer;

(vii) a liquid-impervious barrier layer underneath said absorbing system;

- 5 b) a breathable extension component projecting from said liquid-absorbing section, said breathable extension component including a proximal edge and a distal edge spaced from said proximal edge by a distance of at least about 2.5 cm, said proximal edge being united to said liquid-absorbing section;
- 10 c) said breathable extension component including a portion that is spaced apart from one of said flaps relative the longitudinal axis of said liquid-absorbing section;
- 15 d) said portion manifesting a moisture vapor transmission rate of at least about 3000 g/m²/day;
- 20 e) said breathable extension component having an average absorption capacity that is substantially less than an average absorption capacity of said liquid-absorbing section.

28. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 27, wherein the portion of said breathable extension component has a moisture vapor transmission rate of at least about 4000 g/m²/day.

29. A sanitary napkin as recited in claim 28, wherein said breathable extension component includes a pair of opposite portions, each portion being spaced apart from a respective one of said flaps relative the longitudinal axis of said liquid-absorbing section.